

Seattle City Council

Public Safety, Civil Rights, and Arts Committee Meeting

Tuesday, 2 PM, September 21, 2004

Words' Worth

The Poetry Program of the Seattle City Council

Curated by **Anna Maria Hong & Grant Cogswell**

Today's Words' Worth poet is **Anna Maria Hong**

Anna Maria Hong is Writer-in-Residence at the Richard Hugo House and curator of *The Po Show*, a filmed quarterly on the poetics of the Irrational and the Marvelous. She earned her MFA in poetry and fiction at the University of Texas' Michener Center for Writers. Hong's poems have been published or are forthcoming in *Fence*, *Hotel Amerika*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Gargoyle Magazine*, and *Borderlands: Texas Poetry Review*. Her interview with Adam Zagajewski currently appears in *Poets & Writers* online. She is writing a sequence of 100 sonnets.

Fablesque

by Anna Maria Hong

Now, gather up the elements: sleep and kiss
and fat and hair. Get me a goose and glass
a casket, tump a princeling full of blare.
Here is the fish blown to ocean. Here,

the little basket of bittering flares.
Silver and silver, sighs the mirror.
Silver, silver, hi-dee-ho. Under each story
lies a fable, beneath the fable, a shallow

row. I put on white to stave the worry.
My lips are as red as nuclear snow.
Bring me a cup of explicable fury.
Divine the whither, if not the when.

I toss a coin in the seven-cent fountain.
The mirror tells me, *wish again*.

Astral Sonnet 1

by Anna Maria Hong

Geometry and the Moon creatures chased
a beautiful orange. His round mounded
lips eclipsed all reminiscences of home.
Earth (for her part) cast in the appointed
lineup three wolves whose shadows stream-surfaced
like two at the end of the world. Wound and wounded
to see his wounded side. Deep worshipped comb.

Geometry and the moon's animal disjointed.
As it was foretold: dipped and then blessed.
To gather a creature mythological, grounded.
To hold the undivided, to everlast, to roam.
Earth, for her part, cast at the anointed
her hour, her lot with the voice-dripped honey.
His shadow of Sol or Mani (of Mani).

Bupleurum Wandering Chamber

by Anna Maria Hong

In the chamber of the wanderers, I was fourth in line.
Between the vial and the snow and the boot-print in the snow.
Smart, how they placed me in the double-walled chamber.
Smart, how this wood marks nothing like privacy.

Face in the cradle, I awake from a fallow dream.
Once was butcher paper waxing aqueous rhythm.
Someone sunk a hole where my face should have been.
Meanwhile in the chamber, boot-steps shuffle in.

Young doctor from Guangdong pulls rods from my back.
Shuts them in a red can labeled *liberation*.
His hands, two valves siphoning my bliss.
Once again, I shall drool empathically supine.

In the wandering of the chamber at the stroke of the sign.

- end -